

CLAIMS

1. An inflatable hose system comprising first and second hose lengths adapted to be detachably coupled together, and end-sealed thus to be inflatable, and including an inflation valve connected to at least one of the first and second hose lengths.
2. An inflatable hose system according to Claim 1, wherein at least one of the first and second hose lengths has one end flattened and sealed and, at an opposed end, has one part of a two-part coupling such that the two hose lengths may be coupled together with or without the interposition of one or more additional lengths of standard hose.
3. An inflatable hose system according to Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein the inflation valve is mounted in the wall of one of the hose lengths.
4. An inflatable hose system according to Claim 2, wherein the or each flattened and sealed end includes a superimposed rigid plate and includes means for attachment thereto of a line or shackle.
5. An inflatable hose system according to Claim 2 or claim 4, wherein the or each flattened end is sealed with a bonding agent and is vulcanised, with a pair of opposed plates bolted together through the flattened and vulcanised hose end.

6. An inflatable hose system according to Claim 2, wherein the or each coupling part includes a valve to enable the associated hose length to be sealed after inflation.
7. An inflatable hose system according to Claim 3, wherein the inflation valve comprises an inner sleeve and an outer sleeve threadedly connected together, the inner sleeve having a spigot which passes through an aperture in the hose wall, and a clamping washer being interposed between the inner and outer sleeves and having annular protrusions which serve to trap the wall of the hose between the inner and outer sleeves.
8. An inflatable hose system according to Claim 7, including an elbow connector threadedly engaged within the bore of the inner sleeve and including a one-way pressure relief valve.
9. An inflatable hose system according to any preceding claim, incorporating an angular elbow connector attachable between the respective hose lengths whereby the system may be assembled to form an angular or curved boom.
10. An inflatable hose system according to any preceding claim, including an inflation unit comprising a pressure regulator, a pressure relief valve and selectable valve means to permit deflation of the hose system.
11. An inflation unit according to Claim 9, wherein the pressure regulator is adapted to inflate the hose system to a pressure in the range of 2 to 3.5 bar.

12. A method of producing a floatable boom comprising the steps of providing first and second hose lengths each having one end sealed, detachably coupling the hose lengths together and inflating the coupled hose lengths to a pressure sufficient for them to become rigid such that they may be pushed from one end across the surface of water without submerging.
13. A method according to Claim 12, wherein the sealed end of at least one of the hose lengths is flattened to become chisel-shaped whereby the hose will ride across the surface of the water easily and rapidly without submerging.
14. A method according to Claim 12 or Claim 13, including the step of interposing one or more further lengths of open-ended hose between the first and second hose lengths thus to extend the length of the system.
15. A method according to Claim 14, wherein the or each further length of standard hose is attached to one of the first and second hose lengths after inflation thereof.
16. A method according to Claim 12, wherein at least one angular connector is attached between the respective hose lengths to form an angular or curved boom capable of containing floating objects or substances.

17. A method according to any one of Claims 12 to 16, wherein the coupled hose lengths are inflated to a pressure in the range of 2 to 3.5 bar.